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Theorie der Erdgestalt nach Gesetzen der Hydrostatik von Clairaut. Herausgegeben von P. E. B. Jourdain und A. von Oettingen. Ostwald's Klassiker, Nr. 189. 162 pp. Diagrams. W. Engelmann, Leipzig, 1913. Mk. 4.60. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$.

A. C. Clairaut (Clairault) was born at Paris in 1713, the son of a teacher of mathematics. At the age of thirteen he read before the Academy of Paris a paper on four newly discovered curves, and at sixteen completed "Researches on Curves with Double Curvature." After taking part in the expedition to Lapland for the measurement of the meridian he published in 1743 his "Theory of the Shape of the Earth according to the laws of Hydrostatics," which was the most important step forward in the study of the shape of the earth since the work of Newton, Huyghens, and Bouguer. Laplace called it "one of the most beautiful mathematical productions," and Todhunter has said of it: "In the figure of the earth no other person has accomplished so much as Clairaut; and the subject remains at present substantially as he left it, though the form is different. The splendid analysis which Laplace supplied adorned, but did not really alter, the theory which started from the creative hands of Clairaut." The work has therefore been rightly included in Ostwald's editions of "classical works of the exact sciences." The volume contains a translation of the original treatise, a short biography of the author, his portrait, and an appendix of notes and works of reference.

M. K. GENTHE.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Coast Erosion and Protection. By Ernest R. Matthews. xiv and 147 pp. Maps, ill., index. Charles Griffin & Co., London, 1913. \$3.50. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$.

Although this volume is designed primarily for use by engineers having to deal with harbor and coast protection, it contains some things of value to those interested in the physical geography of the shoreline. Among the abundant illustrations are some of the most remarkable pictures of breaking waves which have ever come to the reviewer's notice. The various types of sea defenses are well shown by good diagrams and photographs. A brief and rather superficial discussion of "wave-action," accompanied by diagrams incorrectly representing the water as moving forward in the wave troughs, is followed by two chapters summarizing the extent of erosion and accretion at different points on the English coast. It appears that a retreat of the shoreline under wave attack amounting to an average of fifteen feet or more per year is not uncommon, while other points advance into the sea almost as rapidly. The author properly concludes that the loss of land exceeds the gain, since part of the wave-eroded material must be carried out into deep water; but if he means that the *area* lost exceeds the area gained, his conclusion is not justified by his arguments; for the area might increase while the bulk of land decreased. Attention is called to the rather inconsistent attitude of the British Government, which, according to the author, contributes nothing to the cost of coast protection, but promptly seizes any new land formed from the eroded materials.

D. W. JOHNSON.

Mountains: Their Origin, Growth and Decay. By J. Geikie. xix and 311 pp. Ills., index. D. Van Nostrand Co., New York, 1914. \$4. 9×6 .

In a medium-sized volume, the veteran author has achieved a critical summary of the present status of orogenic knowledge. He has expressed its aim as to be "helpful to readers not especially versed in Geology, who desire a fuller knowledge than is usually presented in geographical textbooks."

The description of the simple mountains of accumulation is followed by a treatment of the more complex structures of deformation. Here the Alps serve as the principal, because the best studied, type. An excellent résumé is given of their geological structure and of the various theories that have been held with regard to their origin, culminating in the idea of overthrusts and of overfolds as their leading causes. The closing chapters are concerned with oceanic